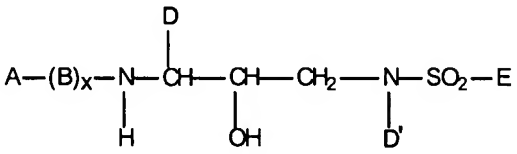
Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A compound of formula I:



(I)

wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of $-R^1-C_1-C_6$ alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxy, $-NR^2-CO-N(R^2)(R^2)$ and $-CO-N(R^2)(R^2)$;

each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of -C(O)-, $-S(O)_2-$, -C(O)-C(O)-, -O-C(O)-, $-O-S(O)_2$, $-NR^2-S(O)_2-$, $-NR^2-C(O)-$ and $-NR^2-C(O)-C(O)-$;

~~each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one heteroatom selected from N, $N(R^2)$, O, S and $S(O)_n$, wherein~~

~~said heterocycle may optionally be benzofused; and wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R_2$, $-C(O)-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-R^2$, $-OCF_3$, $-S(O)_n$-Ar, methylenedioxy, $-N(R^2)-S(O)_2(R^2)$, halo, $-CF_3$, $-NO_2$, Ar and -O-Ar;~~

each R^2 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_3 alkyl optionally substituted with Ar; with the proviso that when R^2 is C_1-C_3 alkyl substituted with Ar, said Ar may not be substituted with an Ar-containing moiety;

B, when present, is $-N(R^2)-C(R^3)(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

each R^3 is independently selected from the group consisting of H, Het, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said R^3, except H, may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, -CN, $-SR^2$, $-CO_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$;

each n is independently 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; C_1-C_4 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, $-OR_2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; C_2-C_4 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_6

cycloalkyl, $-OR^2$, $-R^3$, -O-Ar and Ar; C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar; and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with or fused with Ar;

each Ar is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring, wherein said carbocyclic ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)$-C(O)-R^2, C_1-C_3 alkyl substituted with -OH and optionally substituted with Ar, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, -C(O)-$N(R^2)(R^2)$, halo and $-CF_3$;

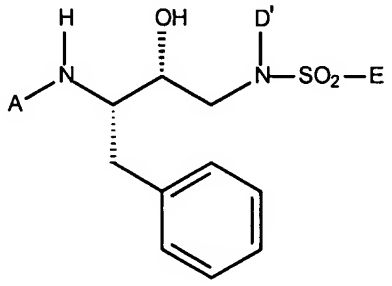
E is selected from the group consisting of Het; O-Het; Het-Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^3$; C_1-C_6 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; C_2-C_6 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; C_3-C_6 saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; and C_5-C_6 unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of R^4 and Het; ~~and~~

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one heteroatom selected from N, $N(R^2)$, O, S and $S(O)_n$, wherein said heterocycle may optionally be benzofused; and wherein any member of said Het

may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)(R^2)$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)-R_2$, $-C(O)-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-R^2$, $-OCF_3$, $-S(O)_n$-Ar, methylenedioxy, $-N(R^2)-S(O)_2(R^2)$, halo, $-CF_3$, $-NO_2$, Ar and -O-Ar; and

each R^4 is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo, $-NR^2-C(O)-R^2$ and -CN.

Claim 2 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXII:

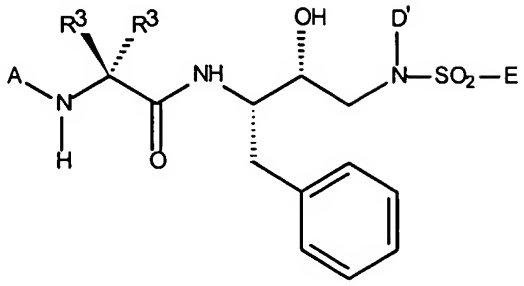


(XXII)

and A, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (original): The compound according to claim 1, characterized in that said compound has the structure of formula XXXI:



(XXXI)

and A, R^3, D' and E are defined as in claim 1.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A compound of formula I, wherein:

A is selected from the group consisting of -R^1-C_1-C_6 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_1-C_4 alkoxy;

each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of -C(O)-, -$S(O)_2$-, -C(O)-C(O)-, -O-CO-, -O-$S(O)_2$- and -NR^2-$S(O)_2$-;

~~each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one heteroatom selected from N, O and S, which may optionally be benzofused; wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$, $-R^2$-~~

~~OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$ and $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)_2$;~~

each R^2 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_1-C_3 alkyl;

B, when present, is $-NH-CH(R^3)-C(O)-$;

x is 0 or 1;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of Het, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, wherein any member of said R^3 may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_n-N(R^2)_2$, Het and -CN;

n is 1 or 2;

D and D' are independently selected from the group consisting of Ar; C_1-C_4 alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl or Ar; C_2-C_4 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl or Ar; C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar; and C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl, which may be optionally substituted or fused with Ar;

Ar is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; 3-6 membered carbocyclic ring wherein said carbocyclic ring may be saturated or unsaturated and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$, $-N(R^2)-C(O)R^2$, $-R^2-OH$, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$, halo and $-CF_3$;

E is selected from the group consisting of Het; $-O-R^3$; $-NR^2R^5$; C_1-C_6

alkyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; C_2-C_6 alkenyl, which may be optionally substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; C_3-C_6 saturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more R^4 or Het; and C_5-C_6 unsaturated carbocycle, which may optionally be substituted with one or more R^4 or Het;

each Het is independently selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl; C_5-C_7 cycloalkenyl; C_6-C_{10} aryl; and 5-7 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, containing one heteroatom selected from N, O and S, which may optionally be benzofused; wherein any member of said Het may be optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of oxo, $-OR^2$, $-R^2$, $-N(R^2)_2$, $-R^2$-OH, -CN, $-CO_2R^2$, $-C(O)-N(R^2)_2$ and $-S(O)_2-N(R^2)_2$;

each R^4 is independently selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NHR^2$, $-S(O)_2-NHR^2$, halo and -CN; and

each R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of H and R^3.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (previously presented): The compound according to claim 1, wherein:

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_5-C_6 cycloalkyl, C_5-C_6 cycloalkenyl and a 5-6 membered saturated or unsaturated heterocycle, wherein any member of said R^3 may optionally be substituted with one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of $-OR^2$, $-C(O)-NH-R^2$, $-S(O)_nN(R^2)(R^2)$, Het, -CN, $-SR^2$, $-C(O)_2R^2$, $NR^2-C(O)-R^2$; and

D' is selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_3 alkyl and C_3 alkenyl, wherein said alkyl or alkenyl may optionally be substituted with one or more groups selected from the group consisting of C_3-C_6 cycloalkyl, -OR^2, -O-Ar and Ar.

Claims 8-10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (original): The compound according to claim 1, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 700 g/mol.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The compound according to claim 11, wherein said compound has a molecular weight less than or equal to about 600 g/mol.

Claims 13-17 (canceled).

Claim 18 (withdrawn): A method of using a compound according to any one of claims 1-2, 4-5 or 7 as a therapeutic agent against viral infection, said virus requiring an aspartyl protease for an obligatory life cycle event.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 18, wherein said virus is HIV-1, HIV-2, or HTLV.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): A method of inhibiting enzymatic activity in an aspartyl protease comprising the step of contacting the aspartyl protease with a compound according to any one of claims 1-2, 4-5 or 7.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 20, wherein said aspartyl protease is HIV protease.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A method for preventing HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-2, 4-5 or 7.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): A method for treating HIV infection in a mammal comprising the step of administering to said mammal a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-2, 4-5 or 7.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 22 or 23, wherein said step of administering comprises oral administration or administration by injection.

Claims 25-27 (canceled).